

Standardized Tests in P-12 Schools

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Positive Aspects of Standardized Testing

- Tests are an objective assessment because they consist of multiple choice and extended response questions graded by an unaffiliated teacher
- They give future teachers reference of their students progress in multiple subjects
- Tests show students strengths and weaknesses in different subject areas
- The high stakes of the tests give teachers incentive to attend professional development because they are held accountable for their students' progress

Challenges and Accommodations for English Language Learners

- Achievement gap between ELLs and other students are in the double digits
- No Child Left Behind Act attempts to close achievement gap but asks ELLs to take standardized tests after one year in United States
- Tests are invalid if students are not fluent in English because it only tests their mastery of the language
- Reformers advocate for students to take the tests in their native language until proficient in English, others emphasize importance of extra time or resources
- Cultural incongruities make tests more difficult
- Students could be assessed with cumulative portfolios

Negative Aspects of Standardized Testing

- Teaching to the test inflates test scores and does not provide a true representation of students' understanding
- Students learn testing methods rather than the actual material
- Teaching to the test takes valuable time out of class that should be used to teach material, not testing strategies
- The material on the test does not always align with the material taught in class
- A student with a strong background in scientific knowledge could end up with a lower score on the test because of a lesser degree of knowledge of the English language
- The procedures creates a trap for the students who are at the highest risk of failing, therefore they have the most to lose under high stakes testing

